



EASR President's Report, June 2022

At the EASR Conference in Cork this month, the executive officers will conduct the final meetings of this triennium and hold elections for the next one. Owing to global events, it has been the most unusual and testing of periods. The onslaught of Covid in 2020 led to the cancellation of the IAHR Congress in New Zealand, and EASR officers decided to cancel the annual meetings for 2020 on the grounds of *force majeure*. The following year, supported by the innovation and dedication of the Italian association, EASR held a hybrid conference, with virtual business meetings. And this year, in 2022, thanks to the efforts of our Irish colleagues, we are back in person for our meetings in Cork.

In late-February 2022, global events took another turn with Russia's invasion of Ukraine. This demanded a response from European organisations, including EASR. The officers met to discuss and formulate a statement, which was duly circulated to member associations and posted on the website on 2 March. In addition to condemning the action and hoping for a just and peaceful resolution, it expressed our solidarity and support for colleagues in the Ukrainian Association of Researchers of Religion (UARR), and stressed our commitment to facilitating the UARR to host the planned EASR conference in 2023 "in whatever form possible". As the General Secretary will report, we have remained in regular contact with the UARR and the Kiev conference organisers, and have sought to find a satisfactory solution for next year's events. We continue to hold Ukrainian colleagues – indeed all Ukrainian citizens – in our thoughts.

In terms of our wider European relationships, the President has the particular task of representing EASR on EASSH, the European Alliance for Social Sciences and Humanities. Unsurprisingly, meetings have been held online in the last couple of years, with the most recent meeting of the EASSH General Assembly held in November 2021. In addition to updates on the organisation and activities of the Alliance, there were talks on the integration of social sciences and the humanities in Horizon Europe, on their role in global research and innovation, and on work towards the consolidation of European research infrastructures, platforms, data etc. Let me draw your attention to two things. The first is the success of EASSH and others in lobbying for greater inclusion of the social sciences and humanities in Horizon Europe. There has been a huge increase in the SSH budget, notably in Cluster 2 (Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society), but also across the board, with the potential of SSH now recognised and integrated into all clusters. In addition to SSH contribution to traditional areas of data collection and methodology, there is now a recognition of the need to incorporate knowledge and understanding of values, democracy and creativity for future global challenges, not least of all in relation to ideological, social and religious movements. Secondly, EASSH has developed a programme of regular webinars on policy, methodology, infrastructures and other shared issues. More information about EASSH and participation in webinars can be found on [EASSH - European Alliance for Social Sciences and Humanities - EASSH](#).

It is worth noting the focus in this triennium on conduct and standards, with the introduction last year of an EASR Code of Conduct for conferences and meetings. Additionally, with the intensification of online communication – in part due to Covid – occasional controversies on the



EASR e-lists and some inappropriate conduct have had to be managed. This year we have operated a provisional Code of Conduct for the e-lists whilst also consulting with members about the future direction of the lists. The Internet Officer, who has led on this part of our work, will report on these matters at this year's meetings.

This being the final year of the triennium, EASR has looked towards the election of officers for 2023-25. The nominations committee, whose membership was agreed at last year's AGM, worked diligently to bring forward the names of potential candidates, with their approval and statements of intent. The election will be finalised at the Executive Committee Meeting in Cork and reported at this year's AGM. We would like to thank the nominations committee for its work.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the EASR officers for their work over this three-year period (though they must continue until the end of the calendar year). We have had to cope with serious and unexpected challenges as well as routine business. It has been a relief to us all, I think, that we have conducted our work over the period in a truly collegial spirit. We have been able to discuss issues openly and to find consensus when it mattered. Everyone has worked hard, but no doubt all the officers would want me to single out the General Secretary, Jenny Berglund, for her unfailing work, thorough approach and resolute commitment and service to the EASR.

Kim Knott, EASR President

Lancaster, UK, 15 June 2022